THE HON'BLE SRI JUSTICE L.NARASIMHA REDDY

W.P.No.23294 of 2005

Date:31.10.2005

Between:

A.R.Reddy, S/o.A.C.Reddy.

----------Petitioner

AND

The Depot Manager, APSRTC, Karimnagar-II Depot.

----------Respondent

ORDER*:*

The petitioner is employed as a driver in APSRTC. He was issued a Charge Sheet, dated 04.03.1995, alleging that he was unauthorisedly absent for certain period and that he was required to submit the explanation as to why necessary disciplinary action shall not be taken against him. The petitioner submitted his explanation to the same. On a consideration of the same, the respondent passed an order, dated 30.09.1996, imposing the penalty of stoppage of annual increment for a period of eighteen months and further directed that it shall have the cumulative effect on the future increments. The petitioner challenges the same.

The only point urged by Sri P.Govinda Rajulu, the learned counsel for the petitioner, is that the respondent imposed the penalty of stoppage of annual increment for a period of eighteen months with cumulative effect without conducting departmental enquiry. He placed reliance upon the judgment of the

Apex Court in ***KULWANTH SINGH GILL v. STATE OF PUNJAB*** and submits that stoppage of increment is a major penalty and it cannot be imposed, except by conducting departmental enquiry.

Smt.P.Rajini Reddy, the learned Standing Counsel appearing for the respondent, on the other hand, submits that the penalty imposed against the petitioner itself is minimal, if the lapse on his part is taken into account.

It is a matter of record that the respondent imposed the penalty of stoppage of annual increment for a period of eighteen months with cumulative effect on the allegation that the petitioner was unauthorisedly absent for certain period. Though a charge sheet was issued to the petitioner before the penalty was imposed, no departmental enquiry was conducted. I n ***KULWANTH SINGH GILL's case*** (supra), the Supreme Court held that stoppage of increments with cumulative effect is a major penalty and it cannot be imposed, except by conducting departmental enquiry. In view of the same, the impugned order cannot be sustained.

In the ordinary course of things, the impugned order needs to be set aside, leaving it open to the respondent to pass fresh orders. To avoid further delay and complication in the mater, this Court is of the view that the impugned order can be treated as the one for stoppage of annual increment without cumulative effect.

Hence, the writ petition is partly allowed, directing that the order, dated 30.09.1996, passed by the respondent shall be treated as the one for stoppage of annual increment for a period of eighteen months without cumulative effect and that the petitioner shall not be entitled for any monetary benefits up to the date of this order. There shall be no order as to costs.

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31.10.2005

Prv

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